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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY
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December 7, 2023

The Honorable Christopher Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Wray,

As members of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (“CCP”), we write today to express our heightened and continuing concern regarding the threat TikTok poses to Americans in light of recent reports that TikTok’s internal platform—which houses its most sensitive information—was inspected in person by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agents in the lead-up to the CCP’s 20th National Congress. Under the National Intelligence Law of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), ByteDance and TikTok are required to assist in CCP intelligence gathering and to provide the CCP with data—including on Americans. These alarming reports reaffirm our concerns regarding the CCP’s ability to use TikTok to spy on Americans and influence the content that they consume. Therefore, we respectfully request a briefing on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Justice’s investigation of ByteDance, TikTok’s parent company, and the CCP’s ability to surveil Americans. The briefing should also highlight what steps the FBI is taking to protect the sensitive data of American citizens from falling into the hands of the CCP.

According to reports last month, ByteDance granted PRC cybersecurity regulators access to TikTok’s backend system, which hosts some of TikTok’s most sensitive data, ahead of the CCP’s 20th National Congress. In October 2022, Chinese regulators conducted a broad review of TikTok’s internal workplace collaboration platform called Feishu, including regarding information related to “product network security, data security, personal information, and daily operations.” As part of this review, ByteDance also allowed the government regulators to perform an “on-site regulatory inspection,” and “fulfill ad hoc inspection requirements from the

National Radio and Television Administration (Beijing), Cyberspace Administration of China, National Government Offices Administration, and Cybersecurity corps.”¹ Fieshu hosts some of the company’s most sensitive information, including TikTok employees’ documents, chats, meetings, calendars, and other business records. TikTok’s claim that no proprietary information was accessed in the onsite visit strains credulity. This is the first publicly reported news article describing a specific instance in which the PRC government officials directly accessed a product that hosts secret TikTok information, and we are concerned that this put U.S. user data at risk.²

As it stands today, we believe that under ByteDance ownership, TikTok is a threat to U.S. national security, and American citizens could be unwittingly compromising themselves to CCP surveillance and influence. Just last December, an internal ByteDance investigation found that employees tracked multiple American journalists covering TikTok and gained access to their IP addresses and user data on TikTok. It is our understanding that DOJ and FBI are investigating these allegations. In addition, TikTok’s algorithms can not only influence the content that Americans see, possibly at the direction of the CCP, but it can also censor or amplify information. For instance, according to a new U.S. Department of State report, “TikTok’s owner ByteDance seeks to block potential critics of Beijing, possibly including those outside the PRC”³ and “as of late 2020, ByteDance maintained a regularly updated internal list identifying people who were likely blocked or restricted from all ByteDance platforms, including TikTok, for reasons such as advocating for Uyghur independence.” Indeed, the CCP continues to commit genocide against at least two million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups and subject them to mass internment, forced labor, and other human rights abuses. We do not believe that a regime that is committing such human rights violations should be able to silence U.S. critics of these policies, let alone be able to surveil U.S. users, prey on American children, and exploit sensitive U.S. data to the detriment of our national security.

We must work to ensure that we are taking the steps necessary to protect American citizens from this pervasive threat. Therefore, in order to supplement the concerning information we have previously learned regarding this threat from public and non-public sources, and to better understand how the FBI is protecting the sensitive information of Americans from malign influence and surveillance, we respectfully request that you provide a classified briefing on ByteDance and TikTok’s impact on American security as soon as possible. We request that is briefing occur no later than December 22, 2023.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

¹ Emily Baker-White, *A Platform Storing TikTok Corporate Secrets Was Inspected By The Chinese Government*, FORBES (Nov. 1, 2023) available at www.forbes.com/sites/emilybaker-white/2023/11/01/a-platform-storing-tiktok-corporate-secrets-was-inspected-by-the-chinese-government/?sh=5fea935623b2.

² *Id.*

³ *How the People’s Republic of China Seeks to Reshape the Global Information Environment*, U.S. DEP’T OF STATE (Sep. 29, 2023) available at www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HOW-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA-SEEKS-TO-RESHAPE-THE-GLOBAL-INFORMATION-ENVIRONMENT_508.pdf.

Sincerely,



Mike Gallagher
Chairman
Select Committee on the CCP



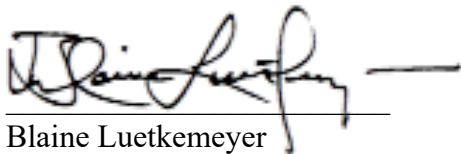
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Ranking Member
Select Committee on the CCP



Rob Wittman
Member of Congress



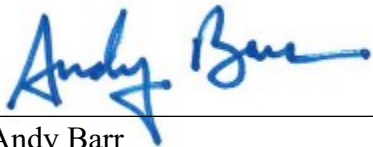
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



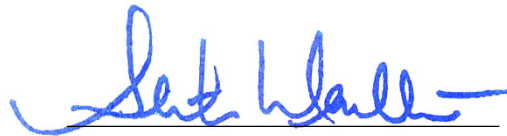
Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



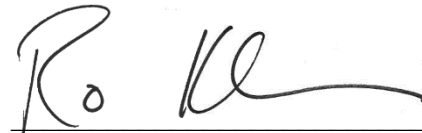
Andy Barr
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



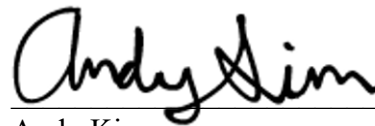
Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



John Moolenaar
Member of Congress



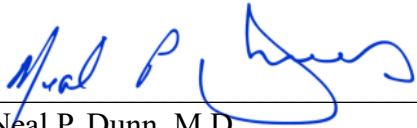
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



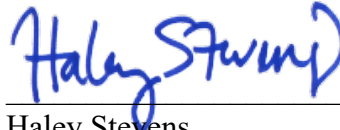
Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



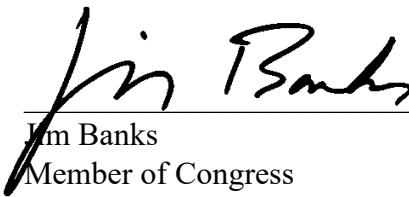
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



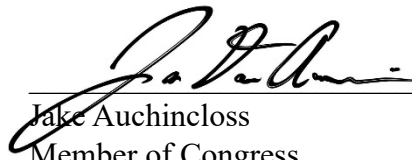
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



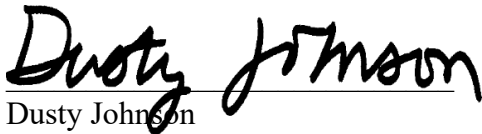
Haley Stevens
Member of Congress



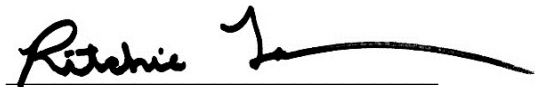
Jim Banks
Member of Congress



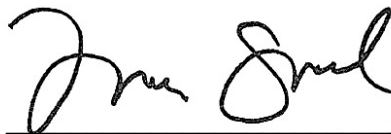
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



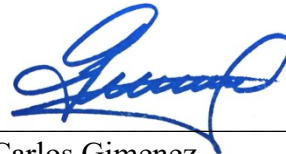
Michelle Steel
Member of Congress



Shontel Brown
Member of Congress



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress



Carlos Gimenez
Member of Congress